



## **Saudi Arabia and the United States: Friends and Partners**

### **A legacy, and a living, relationship**

Since the historic meeting between King Abdulaziz and President Roosevelt aboard the USS Quincy 65 years ago, the United States and Saudi Arabia have shared a close and personal relationship. This relationship has continued through the decades on political, economic, and cultural levels.

President Obama began his June 2009 Middle East visit with a stop in Riyadh to consult with King Abdullah on a number of regional and international issues. One of President Obama's first appointments as President was that of George Mitchell as Special Envoy for Middle East Peace. Shortly thereafter Secretary of State Clinton appointed Dennis Ross as Special Advisor to the Secretary of State for The Gulf and Southwest Asia. These and other senior US officials have visited Saudi Arabia—some of them more than once—for consultations with the Saudi government.

In 2005, King Abdullah announced the creation of a scholarship fund for Saudi students to study abroad. Thousands of King Abdullah Scholarship students are now studying in the U.S. These students are not only cultural ambassadors of Saudi Arabia, but they are the future trustees of the living, and dynamic, bilateral relationship.

Saudi and American citizens share close ties, spanning the modern history of the Kingdom. Saudi Arabia developed its energy resources in close partnership with the United States, while thousands of Americans helped contribute to the development of the Kingdom's infrastructure. Over the years, thousands of Saudi students have traveled to the U.S. in pursuit of higher education, which many used to direct Saudi development initiatives. The personal, individual, and institutional ties developed through these experiences bound our two great nations even closer together.

### **Political friends and allies, pursuing common objectives**

The United States and Saudi Arabia are steadfast allies in a common struggle against transnational terrorism and in joint efforts to resolve regional conflicts. The two countries have worked in partnership to stem extremist movements and their members

seeking to threaten global security. The two governments frequently coordinate to promote stability in conflict-ridden areas, especially through development and humanitarian initiatives. The U.S. and Saudi Arabia both actively promote a shared vision of a better, more secure and more prosperous world for all.

### **Trade and joint venture partners**

Since the 1930's, with the first agreements to develop the Kingdom's energy resources, Saudi Arabia and the U.S. have enjoyed a close economic partnership. The bilateral economic relationship, based originally on energy and infrastructure development, has expanded to include a variety of investment and commercial activities. The U.S.-Saudi Council for Trade and Investment continues to broaden bilateral economic ties through trade, intellectual property rights protection, investment, vocational training, and environmental agreements. With hundreds of joint ventures, American companies are the largest group of foreign investors in the Kingdom. The Saudi accession to the World Trade Organization provides further opportunities to broaden and deepen these ties.

### **Cultural exchange continues to increase**

Thousands of Saudis have traveled to the U.S. to pursue higher education in a variety of fields and specialties. These students not only brought expertise back to Saudi Arabia, they also forged lasting bonds with the friends they made in the U.S. There are currently about 32,000 Saudi students in the United States, with about 43,000 dependents. The U.S. government has sponsored thousands of deserving Saudi participants on the Fulbright Exchange Program, the International Visitor Leadership Program, and other exchange programs, further deepening our friendship. Many Americans have also traveled to Saudi Arabia in pursuit of similar exchange programs and opportunities.

### **Public Affairs in Saudi Arabia**

The public affairs offices at the U.S. Embassy in Riyadh and the Consulates General in Jeddah and Dhahran aim to foster better understanding of U.S. policies, society and values through a variety of public diplomacy initiatives. Student and professional exchange programs, visiting speakers, and other public outreach initiatives sponsored by the Embassy and Consulates build further bridges between U.S. and Saudi citizens, and reinforce our strong bilateral ties.